

November 19, 2009

### **SHARE THE SACRIFICE ACT ENDS BORROWING TO PAY FOR AFGHAN WAR**

WASHINGTON D.C. – Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI), the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, Congressman John Murtha (D-PA), the Chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, Congressman John Larson (D-CT), the Chairman of the Democratic Caucus, and eight other Democratic Members introduced legislation today that would end the practice of paying for the war in Afghanistan with borrowed money by imposing a war surtax beginning in 2011.

“For the last year, as we’ve struggled to pass healthcare reform, we’ve been told that we have to pay for the bill – and the cost over the next decade will be about a trillion dollars. Now the President is being asked to consider an enlarged counterinsurgency effort in Afghanistan, which proponents tell us will take at least a decade and would also cost about a trillion dollars. But unlike the healthcare bill, that would not be paid for. We believe that’s wrong,” said Obey. “Regardless of whether one favors the war or not, if it is to be fought, it ought to be paid for.”

“The only people who’ve paid any price for our military involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan are our military families,” Obey added. “We believe that if this war is to be fought, it’s only fair that everyone share the burden. That’s why we are offering legislation to impose a graduated surtax so that the cost of the war is not borrowed.”

Working on the principal that if the President and the nation decide that the war is important enough to fight, then it ought to be important enough to pay for, the Share the Sacrifice Act of 2010 requires the President to set the surtax so that it fully pays for the previous year’s war cost. However, the bill allows for a one year delay in the implementation of the tax if the President determines that the economy is too weak to sustain that kind of tax change, and it exempts members of our military who have served in combat since September 11, 2001 along with their families, and the families of the fallen.

“As presidential historian Robert Dallek reminds us, ‘war kills off great reform movements’,” Obey said, noting that World War I ended the Progressive Era, Korea ended Harry Truman’s Fair Deal and Vietnam ended Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society. “If we don’t address the cost of this war, we will continue shoving billions of dollars in taxes off on future generations and will devour money that could be used to rebuild our economy by fixing our broken health care system, expanding educational opportunities and job training possibilities, attacking our long term energy problems and building stronger communities. We cannot allow the war to derail that potential”

Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA), the Chairman of the Financial Services Committee, Congresswoman Anna G. Eshoo (D-CA), Congressman Sam Farr (D-CA), Congressman Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), Congresswoman Betty McCollum (D-MN), Congressman Jim McDermott (D-WA), Congressman Jim McGovern (D-MA), and Congresswoman Linda Sanchez (D-CA), joined Obey, Murtha and Larson as original co-sponsors of the measure.

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